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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the researchers' attempt to apply a social organizational view to the task of developing and implementing peer coaching systems in two schools involved in a school improvement experiment. The premise for the study was based on three findings: (1) staff expectations influence the school's ability to change, (2) the tactics used and the ability to initiate change are affected by building organization, and (3) the school as a workplace affects staff development. The researchers found that school innovations as described on paper would take more energy and tenacity to implement than was available for their research project. They also found that the schools in the study had little ability to support change, so the researchers had to work to increase that ability. Outlined are eight characteristics crucial in the establishment and maintenance of a peer coaching system. The researchers' experiences lead them to suggest that the introduction of new practices is very difficult, and that peer coaching would require adequate time in practice before any meaningful evaluation might be made of its success or failure. A list of references is included. (MD)

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FINDING AND FOUNDING PEER COACHING

An Interim Report of the Application of Research on Faculty Relations to the Implementation of Two School Improvement Experiments

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FINDING AND FOUNDING PEER COACHING[1]

Recent research on staff development and related work on organizational change and the school as a workplace have prompted speculation that the implementation of promising classroom practices depends in part upon a system of classroom-based assistance for, or coaching of, teachers.

Such speculation suggests a three-stage research agenda. The first stage would examine the conditions under which coaching can be produced on a scale which would make it worthwhile to examine its effects. This is a practical question of feasibility. The second stage would investigate the effects of coaching practices on teachers' instructional practices. This is a question of the relative influence of alternative staff development strategies. The third stage would examine the relative effects on students of teaching practices which are more and less influenced by coaching. This is the final question of the indirect influence of staff development on desired educational outcomes.

This paper reports an instance of the first stage of research, a look at the feasibility of coaching. It is an instance of action research. That is, the present material on coaching comprises some findings but also much speculation and prescription. Coaching in large part is a prospective or potential phenomenon. One has to produce enough action to be able to conduct the research.

Following Little (1981), our premise is that the social and organizational aspects of school improvement are crucial. Three findings of that work are relevant here. First, staff expectations regarding improvement, experimentation, colleagial[2] work, and evaluation heavily influence the school's capacity to improve and to adopt new practices or to adapt to its environment. Second, the ability to initiate changes in those expectations and the tactics employed to alter those expectations vary by position in or relation to the building organization. Finally, staff development is more likely to be influential where it

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[2]Of colleagues, as distinct from analogies to colleges (we've changed our minds about the spelling).

takes account of and contributes to certain influential conditions of the school as a workplace.

We will describe an attempt to employ coaching to support implementation of instructional practices in two school improvement experiments, and thereby to describe some technical and social requirements of coaching.

I. A SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

In late 1979, the US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention began a "Delinquency Prevention (School Enhancement) Research and Development Program" to test the effects of selected school practices on the achievement, deportment, and delinquent behavior of students in sixteen elementary and secondary schools in the United States.

This research and development program was predicated on delinquency research which describes schools as having a central place in the production and prevention of delinquent behavior (Hawkins and Weis, 1980; Hirschi, 1969; Johnson, Bird, Little, and Beville, 1981; NIJJDP, 1977; Polk and Schaefer, 1972; and others). It pursues findings and inferences from some education research that various school policies and practices, many of them in the control of school personnel, do or can influence not only the academic achievement but also the deportment and delinquent behavior of the students (Bloom, 1976; Edmonds, 1978; Good and Brophy, 1978; NIE, 1978; Slavin, 1980; and, notably, Rutter et al., 1979).

The school practices to be tested were chosen and participating schools were recruited for planning during the 1980-1981 school year. Training began in the summer of 1981, and implementation began with the 1981-1982 school year. The participating schools are now in their second year of implementation, with continuing grant support from OJJDP. Technical assistance for seven of the sixteen schools was terminated at the end of February, 1983, by OJJDP's new acting administrator.

Coaching has become central to the support of implementation in all the participating schools. Peer coaching was emphasized in two schools, which are the subject here.

The School Enhancement Research and Development program is a fairly typical, if somewhat ambitious, federally financed effort to improve schools on an experimental basis. Grants are available directly or by way of intermediaries to all participating schools. The research and technical assistance components are supported by a grant and a contract, respectively. One portion of the program is testing an array of school-based and community-based interventions in an urban area in the Northwest, where nine elementary and secondary schools are involved.

The other portion involves seven diverse schools in equally diverse localities on the east coast. The smallest community has a population under 35,000; the largest is New York City. Six middle or junior high schools and a high school participate, including students in grades six through ten. The English department of the largest school (3,000+ students) is larger than the entire faculty of the smallest school involved. The student populations range from all-White to all-minority and include all socioeconomic classes.

A. PROGRAM ELEMENTS: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL

Five elements were included in the original program design. Partly by design, partly because of the order in which training sessions were held, and partly because of the lack of energy to do more, one of these elements dominates the projects. The original design called for (1) manipulations of effective school size and staff and student organization (e.g., a house plan in a middle school) to affect the quantity and character of student and faculty interactions; (2) for increased orientation of the curriculum toward work to increase the perceived value of the curriculum; (3) for increased student participation in governance and operation of the school to support their ownership and care of the school; and (4) for adjustments in school-family relations to increase consistency of expectations between them and to draw parents into support of the school program.

The central element, however, is a set of instructional methods which, for the purposes of the program, were classed under three headings.

"Interactive teaching" incorporates an approach to unit and lesson planning common in mastery learning, or outcome-based instruction: careful specification of desired learning outcomes, analysis and ordering of the learning tasks, and formative evaluation with reteaching as necessary. And it includes a lesson planning and delivery format providing for establishing a mental set at the beginning of the lesson, sharing the lesson objective with the students, modeling the desired student performance in the course of teaching, frequent and systematic checks for the understanding of all students in the course of instruction, and other provisions intended to make the students and instructor more responsive and mutually predictable to each other and more productive as a group. The research and development program engaged trainer/consultants to assemble these methods from various sources (Barber, 1979; Block and Anderson, 1975; Bloom, 1976; Cummings, 1980; Gagne and Briggs, 1979; Joyce and Weil, 1980; Rutter et al., 1979; and others).

"Student Team Learning" is based on the materials and methods by that name available from the Center for Social Organization of Schools

at the Johns Hopkins University (Slavin, 1980). Particularly for guided practice, heterogeneous teams of students prepare together and compete against other teams to master the lessons. Often eclectic, the program design also called for teaching students social skills in order to improve the performance of the teams; these methods were derived largely from work done at the University of Minnesota (Johnson and Johnson, 1975).

"Proactive classroom management" includes a variety of techniques to teach and reinforce the teacher's expectations for student conduct and performance in the class and the routines for the class. Teaching the students a signal by which the teacher will ask for the students' attention is one example of technique. Other methods are designed to deal with distractions and disruptions in the classroom in a fashion that lets the teacher continue the lesson and draw the inattentive or distracting student back into the lesson as quickly and efficiently as possible. The use of physical distance in the classroom as an alternative to verbal correctives or reprimands is one example. Effective direction giving, the use of praise, and the use of "sponges" to occupy fruitfully time which might otherwise be spent getting into trouble also were included. Consistent, predictable, and productive routines for classroom interaction were intended. This last set of techniques was also collected by the trainer/consultants from various teaching literature (Emmer and Evertson, 1981; Good and Brophy, 1978; Martin, 1977).

Implementing such a set of practices was an ambitious undertaking. The program's designers explicitly followed Berman and McLaughlin's (1978) conclusion that teachers rise to challenges and that, while ambitious projects tend to accomplish a smaller proportion of their objectives than less ambitious projects, they tend to produce more change in teacher behavior. "Little ventured; nothing gained" (Berman, 1979).

B. RESEARCH DESIGN

Rigorous field experiments have been achieved in all schools. Their main features are (1) random assignment of students to experimental and control groups ranging in size from 120 to 450; (2) repeated and multiple measures of outcomes by means of surveys, achievement tests, and aggregation of school, police, and court records; and (3) extensive observation of the implementation activity, including structured observations of the frequency and proficiency of teachers' use of the practices to be tested.

C. MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE

In light of the Rand Corporation's change agent studies (Berman and McLaughlin, 1975, 1977, and 1978) and of other work (e.g., Fullan and Pomfret, 1977; Hage and Aiken, 1970; Hall, 1979; Hall, Wallace, and Dossett, 1973; Mann and Neff, 1961; Sarason, 1971; Schmuck et al., 1969), it was determined that the research design should be matched by equally rigorous management of support for change.

1. The Magnitude of the Change

In his 1982 review of implementation research pertaining to schools, Fullan discusses fourteen major factors affecting implementation of change. These include several characteristics of the change to be made; characteristics of the school district and its history with innovation; characteristics of teachers, teacher relations, and the role of the principal; and characteristics of external assistance. Whether or how deliberate change occurs is complex and problematic; careful attention to assistance and support is necessary. Others paint similar pictures (Griffin, 1982; Leiberman and Miller, 1979; McLaughlin and Marsh, 1978).

The broad complexities of change should not be permitted to overshadow the magnitude of a change for the person who makes it. As noted by Fullan and Pomfret (1977) and Fullan (1982), implementation of new practices requires the use of new materials and resources and calls for changes in behavior, perspectives, and roles. It takes time to prepare new materials or even to grow sufficiently familiar with new materials prepared by others. One's perspectives or habits of thought are familiar, dear, and rooted in sometimes painful experience; they are not discarded lightly. No educator readily could accept the implication that a much higher proportion of his students of the past fifteen or twenty years could have succeeded, even if that were in fact the case. A person's habitual behavior allows him to get through the day more or less in one piece. While novel behavior may present opportunities for improvement and greater satisfaction, it also poses the risk of disorganization, surprise, and failure. If humans are essentially conservative, there are good reasons for it.

Shifts in role--one's behavior toward and under the scrutiny of important others--may be the hardest to make. To adopt some mastery learning ideas or to adopt the practice of frequent checking for student understanding during instruction is to accept an obligation to be more responsive to the students, to modify instruction according to outcomes. This is not merely a technical shift; it accords more influence to students in their relations with teachers. Similarly, the systematic use of student team learning makes the teacher less the direct leader of discussion and more a monitor of organized student

activities in the classroom. The student team is attributed importance which in noticeable ways limits or alters the teachers' options for intervention.

At the same time, the use of student team learning may affect a teacher's relations with other teachers. What will other teachers think when they pass by the classroom door and see a teacher (who in fact is intently monitoring groups) sitting on a heat register apparently doing nothing? How will other teachers react when, as is often reported, students ask them also to use the student team techniques?

Observers can easily underestimate the magnitude of change for the persons who must change. It appears that school innovations readily described on paper take more energy and tenacity than anyone would like to believe. Certainly, it appeared that implementation might require more energy, tenacity, and wit than was available in this research and development program.

2. The Initial Training and Its Limitations

In terms used by Joyce and Showers (1981), the eventual aim of the staff development program would be "vertical transfer," described by them as a situation in which the participating teachers would develop "high commitment to continuing the strategies," a high level of satisfaction with those strategies, and a degree of skill such that the strategies would "be integrated into a complex environment and transformed for appropriate use as needed." The route from the initial training to that outcome was known from the beginning to be longer than the project's expected duration. There would be a race between implementation and the program's financial clock.

It was also known that the initial training provided to teachers would be quite inadequate to assure enough implementation to test the experimental practices. The initial training on most of the three classes of instructional methods described above could be given five training days. Again in Joyce's and Showers's terms, the training would describe and demonstrate the desired teaching practices. Videotape was used extensively to show teachers using the methods. And, insofar as possible in a five-day training for teachers, the trainers used or modeled all the methods to be used by the teachers. In training teachers, the trainers would practice what they preached. The thorough use with adult trainees of methods intended for elementary and secondary school students produced some interesting moments, as well as collateral benefits which were intended but greater than expected.

Two such benefits should be described. Since student team learning was one of the desired instructional methods, teachers were often trained by those methods: they learned in interdependent teams. From the first day of training, many teachers wrote on the daily evaluation sheets that they appreciated the opportunity to work closely with their colleagues, and that the intensity and duration of these discussions of instruction was unusual in their experience. The notions of interdependence and colleagiality in instructional improvement had been introduced very concretely.

Anticipating the call for coaching, i.e., for assistance requiring direct, "public" commentary on teachers, the trainers also took time in each session to solicit teachers' assessments of the training techniques. In the first instance of this in each training, some notions of polite feedback were introduced, and another trainer responded first, so as to demonstrate the provision of feedback to a colleague on his teaching. At first, teachers were hesitant to provide specific responses to the trainer, but they warmed to the task as the training progressed. At least in the sheltered environment of training, and to a willing listener who was not really a colleague with whom one must work in the future, the teachers would attempt to compose concrete assessments of the practices they had just experienced and observed.

If the Joyce and Showers estimates are correct, this training could have been expected to produce implementation--in the sense of vertical transfer, above--by perhaps 10 percent of the teachers trained. Those authors suggest that higher rates of implementation require at least a chance to practice with new methods in the course of training, and suggest that 20 percent of teachers might implement to the level of vertical transfer as a result. They argue, with less evidence, that coaching in the classroom will be necessary to reach higher rates of implementation.

Even without the benefit of the Joyce and Showers review, the program's consultant/trainers concluded that too much was being attempted and that no training they could construct would provide adequate support for implementation. They were willing to proceed only with the agreement that the program would attempt to construct an effective system of close support for implementing teachers.

3. Resort to Coaching

To support teachers, expert "clinical supervision" (Goldhammer, Anderson, and Krajewski, 1980) would have been the first choice of the trainers. Practically, the program had neither the funds to provide such supervision nor the time to train expert supervisors. Peer coaching--teachers' observing and providing feedback on other teachers' use of the experimental practices--was adopted.

In all schools in the research and development program, some form of clinical supervision or coaching has been provided. In five of the seven "selected site" schools on the east coast, coaching has been provided by one or more members of the project (grant-supported) staff, who were engaged on a full- or part-time basis for that purpose. In the remaining two schools, more broadly based peer coaching was attempted from the beginning.

One is an 1100-student middle school built to contain three houses, or subschools; the experiment included all students in one of the houses plus some students in special education, bilingual education, and learning disabilities programs. The experimenting faculty includes twenty-one teachers, so that students can be exposed to experimental methods in four to six of their seven class periods per day. A second house of the school, and parts of the three special groups, serve as controls.

The second school is a large high school serving over 3,000 students in grades nine through twelve, where the ninth graders (approximately 1,000 students) were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups of equal size. The experimenting faculty includes nineteen teachers, allowing experimental methods to be applied in three of five or six class periods for experimental students.

The attempt to establish peer coaching at these two schools is the focus of the remaining discussion.

II. FINDING AND FOUNDING PEER COACHING

Even as recently as 1981, when training and implementation began in the research and development program, there was little to go on. Little's research on faculty relations in adaptable schools, reported at AERA's 1981 annual meetings, was concluded at about the time teacher training and coaching programs were planned. Bird participated in writing the conclusion of Little's final report, and was also a government consultant for the two schools under discussion here. The research was immediately adopted as a source of tactics.

A. CAPACITY TO CHANGE

In retrospect, it appears that the participating schools as organizations had little ability to influence or support the use of any specific teaching practice. The interactions and expectations which would make plausible such influence or support simply weren't present. In this respect, the two schools resembled the less adaptable schools in Little's study. The schools' abilities to support deliberate change in instruction had to be increased

substantially in order to proceed with the research and development program.

In Little's terms, it was necessary to cultivate the norms of experimentation, evaluation, and colleagiality--the shared expectation that a faculty is always getting better, together--which she found in the more adaptable schools of her study. By contrast with those more adaptable schools, and with an additional school with which the authors were familiar, the two research and development program schools had very limited machinery for supporting and managing change. They do not appear to be rare in that respect; it is possible that necessary foundations for school improvement are absent from many buildings, and that this absence accounts for the frustration often encountered in efforts to improve schools.

B. CRITICAL PRACTICES OF ADAPTABILITY

In the more adaptable schools in her study, Little had detected greater resort to four "critical practices of adaptability." Staff in those schools were more likely to *talk* frequently and concretely about instructional methods than were teachers in the less adaptable schools. They were more likely *to be observed* and to discuss their teaching with the observer. They were more likely to *work together on teaching materials*, which provided them additional opportunities to sort and examine their practices. Finally, they were more likely to *train together and train each other* than were teachers in the less adaptable schools. The adaptable faculties used their time efficiently to improve their practice.

It appears that these habits or practices of adaptability had been established by four main types of actions. Someone had *described and called for* colleagial work: "If we're going to try mastery learning, can we agree to meet one morning a week to study it?" Someone took the initiative to *enact* habits of adaptability: a principal scheduled common planning periods for members of a department. Someone *sanctioned* the colleagial work, by awarding staff development opportunities or providing access to special services or materials. Someone *defended* the habit of getting better together when, as was inevitable, that habit produced confusion, concern, or anger.

Bird prepared a summary for the two research and development project schools which said, in part,

> The staff in these buildings . . . support each other in a systematic and refined practice of teaching which would be hard for an individual to sustain. These faculties are energetic, they make highly efficient use of time, and they share and act on the belief that they *can* teach and that

> students *can* learn. They sense adequate influence over what happens. They tend to report that at the end of the day or the end of the year they are tired out, but they are not *burned out*.

This statement is as much an appeal as a report, an invitation to attempt to realize in many schools a possibility seen in a few.

C. CHARACTERISTICS OF COACHING

It is one thing to have a general view of desirable interactions in adaptable faculties and a general catalog of means for initiating them, and quite another to figure out how to support instructional change on a given Tuesday or Friday. In Little's research, it appeared that several characteristics of the faculty interactions were crucial to their establishment and maintenance. Bird tried to derive tactics from these and to organize discussions and negotiations about them. Here, they are used to organize a description of work in the two schools. Material used in work with the schools is quoted; steps in the establishment of peer coaching are described.

1. Focus

> The interactions of staff are closely and persistently directed to matters of teaching practice, as distinct from the foibles of teachers, students, administrators, and parents, the state of the district, etc.

Faculty interactions in the two schools were focused by the project design as reflected in the initial training and training materials. While some teachers in the projects had agreed to participate as the result of "persuasion" of one sort or another, or joined out of interests tangential to the delinquency prevention aims of the projects, most were volunteers. Many of them had participated in the prior year's planning for the project. All but a few worked together through the initial five-day training. They had taken on the same task.

Neither too much nor too little should be made of the context created by project planning, recruitment, and training. Those activities established some common aims and expectations and provided a shared view of what was to be done in the classroom. This was all to the good, but was already known to be insufficient for implementation

However, the training's description of the desired instructional methods provided a focus for collective work and make it easier to describe peer coaching. Interested teachers were invited to talk about

coaching in a session at the end of each day of the initial training. To begin, they were told that a teacher with a structured observation form would record the lesson of another teacher. The observation would be preceded by a conference to get comfortable with and agree about the procedure and aim of the observation, and would be followed by a feedback session. This procedure was linked to the agreed-upon test of methods and thus placed boundaries on the discussion.

In both schools, peer coaching was immediately associated with "evaluation" or "peer evaluation" and was interpreted as trouble, or as a delicate matter. There seemed to be no preexisting affirmative image of coaching. Teachers expressed reservations about being observed, and also about observing: "Who am I to evaluate my colleague? We're being trained at the same time."

Where administrators were included in these discussions, their participation was discussed at some length. Two issues were central. First, how would administrators who participated in the coaching keep "coaching" and "evaluation" separate? Conclusion: they can't. In one of the schools it was agreed that department chairpersons might be coaches, but that they would "evaluate" only in the teachers' classes which were outside the experiment. It was apparent to all that this awkward agreement stood up only because there was trust. Second, would administrators have access to what teacher-coaches learned in the course of coaching? The decision was, no. The etiquette and ethics of coaching had to be discussed at length before technique could be considered in any detail.

2. Shared Language

> Discussions in the more adaptable schools show a more elaborate and detailed vocabulary for describing teaching, which is more adquate to the complexities of teaching, and thus allows the discussion to be more "practical."

As they described and modeled the desired instructional practices, trainers also urged the adoption and use of a common set of terms for those practices. Those terms were used consistently in the teachers' training manuals. In both schools, some teachers were quick to adopt the argot, in much the same way that they might talk more formally in school than they do outside it. In both schools, some teachers said that some terms gave them "names for what I already knew." In both schools, the attempt to sort out practices by sorting out terms was sometimes seen as an exercise in "just semantics." Occasionally, the trainers' emphasis on terms was interpreted as an attempt to appropriate and dress up things that "we all know."

Overall, there was no substantial resistance to the attempt to introduce shared language. Likewise, outside a small and enthusiastic group of the trainees in each school, there was little overt subscription to the utility of shared terms.

The trainers' proposal of a shared language was carried through into coaching, in the observation form. It called for the observing teacher to keep a running written record of what was going on in the classroom. Once per minute, the observing teacher also would mark a set of columns headed with the names of some of the main practices or classes of practices included in the training. The form asked the observer to indicate whether a practice was being used, and with what proficiency. At least in observation, if not in discussion, teachers would have to use the language introduced by the training.

The negotiations about the kind of marks to put in these columns and about the meaning of the marks might have seemed absurd *from the point of view of someone who had little or nothing at stake.* The impulse was somehow to avoid ever giving any indication that the teacher observed had done anything less than a sterling job. Whether checks or X's had more neutral or negative or positive implications was discussed, as was the meaning of these marks. An acceptable formulation was that a check would mean "the practice was used in a way which to the observer resembled the training rather closely." An "X" would mean that "the practice was used and it appeared that the practice might be made to resemble the training more closely, that is, if the observed teacher should feel that this would be appropriate, given his individual experience and philosophy." There is no derision here; all involved were up against a traditional set of expectations which made it very difficult to dissociate a comment about practice from the person who uses it. Hard enough to describe; harder to do.

3. Participation

> Joint work on teaching includes principals, teachers, and aides. Staff in the adaptable schools report that everyone "belongs" in their work at getting better.

While it was inevitable that summer schedules would make it impossible for some nominally participating teachers to attend the initial training on instructional methods, almost all did. Principals' attendance at that training varied greatly from school to school in the program. In one school described here, all training was attended by a senior vice principal in charge of the project. In the other, the principal and experimental house principal attended parts of the training, and then excused themselves to attend to other duties.

Training for volunteer teacher-coaches was provided in September, 1981, after the initial training on the teaching methods and after

implementation had nominally just begun. Nine of the twenty-one experimenting faculty in one school and five of nineteen experimenting faculty in the other were trained in the sequence of preconference, observation, and feedback conference. With videotapes of teaching, they were taught to use the observation form. They were taught some rules of polite and useful feedback, e.g. "describe before evaluating."

It became apparent that designating teacher-coaches and providing them training created a class or group of "coaches" defined as much by their position as by their activity. A new and awkward role had been created; coaching as a shared tool was not the image which prevailed. The efforts of the teachers trained in coaching were accepted. Observations took place, but not often. Some teachers in both schools took the initiative to invite the coaches in. Others declared that their "door is always open." Some avoided the situation.

Eventually, intending to reduce the idea of coach as a position and strengthen the idea of coaching as a colleagial activity, all or most experimenting teachers in both buildings were given some training in coaching. However, the teachers originally trained in coaching were and are the most active and energetic experimenting teachers in general. They are, and are understood to be, leaders.

4. Position

> One's ability to initiate joint work appears to depend on (a) one's status or office (principal, department head, union representative), (b) one's technical knowledge or skill, and (c) the ability to take different roles (listener or talker), questioner or answerer, leader or follower . . .).

The administrators of both the schools were, in a sense, trapped by the projects. They admitted the projects to their schools with the general understandings which were attained in the project planning period. As the demands of implementation emerged, there also emerged an implicit demand (made explicit by consultants and sometimes by project staffs and teachers) to participate in and lead coaching, to assume a role which has been titled "instructional leader."

While principals or other relevant administrators attended the coaches' training, they were given some separate sessions in which they discussed management of coaching. As a result, they were not included in some sessions on observation technique. That (plus their absence from the original training, to the degree that that was the case) put them at a technical disadvantage compared to the teachers, and put their status in jeopardy. Their training prior to the project gave them little to go on in most cases. The teachers' concerns about the mix of "coaching" and "evaluation" must have been an additional deterrent to their active participation in coaching.

However (and this may be the most important factor in the situation), in neither school would an administrator's observing of teachers, or working with teachers on instruction, be an adequate excuse for turning in a late report to an administrative superior. That is, neither district explicitly supports or rewards instructional leadership of this kind.

In both schools, the leaders and initiators of coaching were the project (grant-supported) coordinators and the teachers first trained as coaches. They tended to be persons most excited about the project. They tended to have built up some reputation in the past. They were given offices--coordinator or coach. And they were provided skills. Administrators in both schools gave them at least verbal endorsement. In one school, where each teacher in the building has a "supervision period" each day, coaching was made the duty of the trained coaches. In both schools, administrators offered to, and sometimes did, cover classes so that teachers could coach each other.

5. Place and Time

> Griping drives talk about instruction out of faculty rooms; administrivia drive talk about instruction out of faculty meetings. In the more adaptable schools, the reverse is true. Shared work on teaching occurs in these locations as well as hallways, classrooms, and lawns. Teachers in the adaptable schools are energetic, it's true; they also use their time efficiently.

Properly done, a single instance of coaching would require two teachers to meet at least briefly for a preobservation conference, keep the observation appointment, and then find a time for a feedback and discussion session. The school schedule was at least described as a common and substantial barrier to coaching in both schools. In one school, teachers serve a seven-period day (not counting a twenty-three-minute lunch) in which there are five periods of teaching, one "conference" period (which can be employed by administrators for school business) and one "free" period. In the other school, teachers serve an eight-period day, of which five are spent teaching, one is lunch, one is "supervision" (duty to the building), and one is a "conference" period.

One must then add the complexity of the school schedule, noting when teachers are free from teaching at the same time (for pre- and post-observation conferences) and at different times (for the observation). While pairs and trios of acquainted teachers can seize their opportunities informally and may be likely to, given their probably closer relations, the full opportunity for coaching is exploited only when the experimenting teachers examine their whole

schedule. People who don't know each other very well are urged to coach each other. It becomes necessary to try to find some substitutes for the form of trust which assumes that another does not *intend* to harm you and which tends to build only with time.

6. Reciprocity

If a powerful analysis of teaching is to be shared, persons' teaching practices cannot be regarded as private or personal, but must be regarded as tools of a profession which are open to evaluation. Such a situation poses risks, which require that the participants meet as equal professionals, sharing both their confusion and their success.

For persons of different status (principals) or different functions (staff developers), that essential equality is difficult. Two things help. They can adopt a stance of curiosity rather than of authority or expertise; they can *learn* equally. And they can make sure that *demands or suggestions are matched by support and help.*

The coaching form may have been one of the main sources of reciprocity. If the coach follows directions, the coach is working very hard all during the observation to capture a near-verbatim record of what is said and done in the class. It appears that by that work, the coach earns some right to speak about the lesson observed. And, an objectified record of the lesson is more persuasive with the observed teacher than off-the-cuff remarks. From such a record, the observer and observed can learn equally. Asked how coaching was going, coaches often would say that they (the coaches) learned.

The observation form provided part of the basis for a sense of trust which does not depend upon knowing another person well and believing that the other intends no harm; it rests instead on a negotiated agreement to use a specified instrument for a specified purpose in agreed ways. One can trust in the negotiated predictability of the coach and, if worse comes to worst, the ability to punish the coach for violation of prior agreements. That form of trust seems workable. It is most strained in the feedback session.

7. Deference

"Deference" may be defined as the right *not* to know that you are not loved, admired, or wanted. There is a way of talking and acting which separates the question of practices and their consequences from the question of persons and their competence, and which separates habits from self-esteem.

Then, the practices and habits can be put on the table and dissected while the person who uses them remains intact.

This advice was helpful. It was fruitful to teach coaches to describe before evaluating. It was fruitful to demonstrate how one can describe observed acts in third-person terms which divorce them from the actor as much as possible. These seem to make observation feedback bearable, more useful, and even satisfying, at least for some of the participating teachers.

Yet, speech and demeanor alone were insufficient to assure deference. The feedback procedure had to be revised when it was discovered that the observation form properly completed leaves the observer with so much to say that the observed has a hard time handling it no matter how it is said. The procedure for the feedback session which emerged was, first, to let the teacher who was observed start the discussion of the lesson. This leaves the observer the chance to reinforce that or choose something else to talk about. Second, pick just one thing to admire, to praise as worthy of continuing. Last, pick just one discrete part of the lesson which might be improved. In addition to all the other agreements, the coach agrees not to say too much. Deference is thus accorded.

The idea of deference, mixed with a lot of faith in the good will, good humor, and persistence of the participating teachers, has been essential to peer coaching in these schools.

B. Frequency

Talk about teaching is not rare or even occasional. It is frequent, constant, and pervasive.

Various objectives have been set for the frequency of coaching in the research and development program, as high as one observation of each experimenting teacher per week. Probably, that frequency has been attained only for a few teachers in the two projects, and then only in spells. Coaching is not a habit in either school yet. It picks up when administrators, project staff, and coaches emphasize it, and then flags again. In the context of other demands on time, coaching has not yet become sufficiently important, useful, practical, or helpful to make it a self-sustaining tradition for each of the experimenting faculties as a whole.

Pairs, trios, and small groups of experimenting teachers have been more enthusiastic about, have grown more skilled in, and take more pleasure in coaching and being coached. Unless thwarted by events in either building, it appears, they may persist. These teachers have, with effort, acquired a taste for coaching.

We are inclined to make two predictions. First, the rate of peer coaching in these two schools will be proportional to the rate of coaching by the administrators. Second (and this assumes that administrative actions and other events do not otherwise preclude it), the rate of peer coaching will vary with the rate at which teachers make specific requests for it. It is not clear whether the research and development program has done enough or done enough of the right things to establish either administrator or peer coaching as a practice which will persist beyond the end of the program.

III. INTERIM ASSESSMENT

The experience in these two schools suggests that peer coaching can be established on a scale which makes studies of coaching's value to staff development feasible.

A. APPLICABILITY OF THE PRIOR RESEARCH

Little's findings were applicable to the circumstances encountered in the two schools. Rough and ready validation of the prior research was provided routinely, in that Bird could employ Little's formulation of a general class of "critical practices" to derive concrete tactics for specific situations and share them with other participants in the projects. The function and character of "deference" in coaching was no more (or less) difficult to describe than the function and character of "interdependence" in student team learning. Talk and action consistent with the abstractions could be described and modeled. Situations and problems could be analyzed in detail from a different and useful point of view. The results of that analysis (things to say and do) were transmitted more easily than the framework for the analysis.

B. DIVISION OF THE HOUSE

One unanticipated consequence of coaching should be noted especially. It appears that, to the degree that coaching was not experienced as help but was experienced as an added demand or source of stress, it hastened the "division of the house," the separation of the experimenting faculty into a more involved group and a less involved group with distance, uneasiness, or outright hostility between the two. Mohlman (1981) reports a similar outcome; the more frequent the coaching, the greater the observed range of teacher implementation of selected practices.

As that effect was noted, the image of coaching was reformulated for the two research and development schools. It now is to establish

faculty groups which, given a wide range of proficiency among their members, can support and can find joy and virtue in the gains of each member. In terms already employed, these groups would have to achieve high focus, high deference, high reciprocity, and high participation.

Central to all these accomplishments is the evolution of a shared professional language. It often seemed that the most useful thing Bird did as a consultant to the schools was to suggest and demonstrate the exact statements or questions which specific persons would make or ask in specific situations. Appreciable time and effort would be spent composing, for example, a neutral and precise third-person description of a classroom event, which description would be followed by a *question*, rather than a statement, about the evaluation of that event.

C. PROSPECTS

The attempt to gain the sort of relation with a coach, project coordinator, or teacher which would allow Bird to provide that kind of coaching or their exact choice of words was bound by the same considerations which have been discussed here for relations among the schools' staffs. That is, Bird had to conduct himself in such a fashion as to establish reciprocity or show deference in order to join the experimenting group in the school. Bird's provisional convictions (hypotheses taken seriously enough to act on them) about teaching and teacher relations were best pursued with teachers by adopting a stance of *curiosity* about those matters. The stance of curiosity helped to overcome barriers to reciprocity such as the status inequality between a teacher and a consultant thrust upon the teacher. To generalize, it appears that "outsiders" such as consultants and staff developers have to practice what they preach about colleagial relations in the school.

Some developments in the two schools suggest that the desired inclusive and internally deferential groups can be organized around peer coaching. Beneficial assistance was given by teachers who were universally described as highly proficient to teachers who were described as being unable even to keep a modicum of order in their classrooms. The specific tactic, agreed to by leaders among the project participants, was to assign a particular coach to a particular teacher for work over longer periods of time. This was intended to facilitate both trust in intentions and trust in agreed-upon procedures and to shield the teacher being coached from stressful scrutiny by a larger group.

At present, a variety of pleasing and not-so-pleasing anecdotes about coaching's contribution to implementation can be given. In contrast to the occasions when coaching seemed to drive teachers out

of the project, coaches in one of the two schools reported that a teacher who had been unable to participate in training was raised to a high level of proficiency in their eyes by coaching alone. They described the relationship, but not the teacher, as being unusual. Between these extremes, there are many war stories.

The research and development program's design does not include a tight test of the effects of coaching on teachers' behavior in the classroom. It will provide information on the frequency and distribution of self-reported and observed coaching in the participating schools, and on teachers' attitudes toward and views of coaching. By comparing the schools, the program's researchers will be able to report perceptions of the contributions of coaching to implementation in sixteen schools. Some of that coaching will be peer coaching. Those reports will be written this year.

The experience in these two schools, buttressed by the inferences and arguments which presently go into the promotion of peer coaching, lead us to suggest that peer coaching should be given a long time to fail. The introduction of new colleagial practices such as coaching is at least as difficult as the introduction of new teaching practices, and both are more difficult than we would like to think. Implementation must precede evaluation.

Or, seeing the glass half full, peer coaching is feasible. The more often we get it right, the more often we can study it. To get better at studying it, we will have to get better at producing it. There is some lore which lends itself to the task.

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